

## Statement by the Republic of Zambia

Mr/Madam Chairperson,

Honorable Ministers,

Your excellences,

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen;

The Republic of Zambia thanks the organizers of this event and would like to extend our sincere thanks to you for inviting us to participate and make our contribution. It is in this vein therefore that Zambia makes this statement to illustrate our commitment to invest in our health workforce for sustainable national development.

Zambia is moving fast to deliver on her commitments to increase the number and skill of her health workforce. As we improve and strengthen our health system- especially the primary health care part, to deliver universal health coverage, we have begun this work by developing our first ever National Surgical Obstetric and Anaesthesia Strategic Plan building on the World Health Assembly resolution WHA68.15, The Lancet commission on Global surgery report and the World Bank's Essential surgery volume of their 3<sup>rd</sup> Disease Control Priorities (DCP3).

Mr/Madam chairperson;

The Absence of the Surgical Workforce at the 1<sup>st</sup> Health Care level has been identified in Zambia as the cause of bad health outcomes in many disease specific programmers such as MCH, poor health indicators and the reason why Infant and Maternal Mortality Rates could not be brought down to our national targets under the MDGs.

The improved availability of a skilled surgical workforce at all the District hospitals in Zambia will not only help reduce morbidity and mortality from difficult child birth, industrial, domestic and road traffic accidents; it will also help us reduce on the burden of physical disability among our people especially those in the

economically productive age group and the school going children. This in turn would enable the individual, family and communities to have the capacity to engage in physical economic activities- thus improving their economic output and that of the nation.

Mr/Madam chairperson;

Training of the needed surgical workforce also helps us solve other national social challenges such as being able to impact the needed economically empowering skills in our youth especially young women, helping us reduce on youth unemployment and also helps us increase the tax base resulting in more revenue for government, less civil strife, a skilled population and a healthy developing nation.

Zambia is happy to report that we have shaped policy at global, regional levels and have developed a plan at national level that could help us towards our goal of achieving a sustainable health workforce. We are also happy to state that private sector is strongly on board and is partnering with GRZ to train and impact the needed skill in our people.

The surgical workforce is a team comprised of many professional cadres and we feel focusing and developing this surgical health workforce would help us eventually address the bigger picture of improving our health workforce employment levels and help put our country on a path towards better health for all and sustainable development.